

2022 UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE
ONLINE STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING: INPUTS TO THE POLITICAL
DECLARATION ZERO DRAFT

23 March 2022

10:30 – 11:30 AM (EDT, New York)

Intervention

Ruby Lang (Major Group for Children and Youth)

Thank you Mr./Ms. Moderator

My name is Ruby Lang speaking on behalf of the Major Group for Children and Youth. We would like to share some reflections on scaling up ocean action based on innovation and the SDG 14.

First, it is clear the Ocean is not only fundamental to life on our planet, but also to our future. The ocean is an important source of the planet's biodiversity and plays a vital role in the climate system and water cycle. With 70 percent of the Earth's surface covered by Oceans, it is the planet's largest biosphere. It is home to up to 80 percent of all life in the world. It provides us with every 3rd breath of oxygen we take no matter where we are in the world and is our planet's largest carbon sink. The Oceans absorb 25 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions and capture 90 percent of the additional heat generated from those emissions. Not only that, but the Ocean nurtures vast biodiversity and produces food, jobs, mineral and energy resources needed for life on the planet to survive and thrive. The Ocean is incredible! Despite all of this, the Ocean is under unprecedented pressure as a result of human activities. Urgent action is required to protect the health of the Ocean from threats posed by growing populations, increasing pollution, over-exploitation, climate change, food insecurity and diminishing biodiversity. **Scaling up Ocean action must be done without also scaling up Ocean use.**

Second, youth around the world are imperative to the solutions and need to be included. Given the critical role that young people have in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans we need young people at the forefront of this issue. Early careers geared toward education, protection, and conservation are impacting ocean preservation everyday and building to resolve the most challenging issues. In addition, we want to express the importance of including the most vulnerable youth; young women and girls. It is imperative that young women and girls are empowered with relevant knowledge and skills that enable them to be at the table for these conversations. This is the group of people who are most impacted by the health of the oceans which only increases the importance of their presence in decision-making. Through promoting and supporting quality education and life-long learning for ocean literacy, young women and girls can be part of the solution too. Young people need more platforms to showcase ideas, recommendations, innovations, youth-led solutions and

actions to “Save our ocean, Protect our future”. **The Oceans are our future and present and so are they.**

Finally, We would like to conclude by stressing that science-based and innovative actions must be used alongside traditional and local knowledge. We need to pair the two to truly tackle these issues we are facing. We too recognize the important role of traditional and local knowledge, innovation and practices held by indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the role of social science in planning, decision-making and implementation. The solutions necessary to overcome the challenges in achieving Goal 14 and keeping the 1.5 degrees Celsius of the Paris Agreement are within reach. The key is to ensure that policy is informed by the best-available science and relevant traditional knowledge. **If we do not create a space for traditional and local knowledge to be included in the solutions we will only leave holes for more problems in the future.**

We would like to finish with a question:

Put simply, the oceans are key to the future of our planet and its health. How can we best integrate youth into the solutions so that we have an empowered generation of people for both the defense of the oceans as well as protection for years to come?